

The Priesthood to Dictate in Temporal As Well As Spiritual Things—Inconsistency of An Equal Division of Property—Let Apostates Alone

Discourse by President Brigham Young, delivered in the Tabernacle, Great Salt Lake City, June 16th, 1867.

These words—"If ye are not one ye are not mine"—are the words of the Savior, through the prophet Joseph, and given to us. This is a principle about which you have heard bro. Robert Williams say a good deal in his way of talking. His mind is like the minds of a great many, both in this Church and out of it, with regard to temporal things. If they had the privilege of dictating the affairs of this people, or of any other, they would divide the substance of the rich among the poor, and make all what they call equal. But the question would arise with me at once, how long would they remain equal? Make the rich and the poor of this community, or of any other, equal by the distribution of their earthly substance, and how long would it be before a certain portion of them, would be calling upon the other portion, for something with which to sustain themselves? The cry would soon be—"I have no bread, no house, no team, no farm; I have nothing." And in a very few years, at the most, large properties would thus pass from the hands of such individuals, and would be distributed among those who know how to accumulate wealth and to preserve it when accumulated. We should be one, there is no doubt of that, but the very men and women who would take the property of the rich and dispose of it to their own advantage, would spurn from their presence and disregard every word of counsel given by those who know how to accumulate and preserve, and they would say, "We know as much as you, and we can dictate our own affairs." So they can, until they make themselves poor and have to be helped by others.

The capacity of the inhabitants of the earth to dictate their temporal affairs, is a matter that has occupied a certain portion of my time and reflection. Now, politically, we as a government enjoy the extent of the franchise granted to us by our Constitution, and that is all we can ask for; but who knows and understands how to dictate and guide in wisdom for the benefit of the whole community? Very few. And take the inhabitants of the earth from first to last, there is not one man in ten, neither is there one in twenty, and probably not one in forty, who is capable of guiding himself through life, so as to accumulate the necessities and comforts of life for himself and family, and go to the grave independent, leaving a comfortable living for his wife and family, with instructions to enable them to pass through life judiciously, wisely, and prudently. Politically and financially there is not one man in forty capable of pursuing the course I have indicated. Then in a moral point of view, take our young men, who are easily operated upon, do they know how to guide their steps so that a good life may crown their last days? No, they do not. Do the young ladies know the course to take to preserve themselves in honor? They do not, any more than the young men. They have to be watched like an infant running around the house, that knows no better than to take the carving knife or fork and fall upon it and put out its eyes. And it is so with the middle aged as well as with the young—they have to be looked after and cared for. And when this people become one, it will be one in the Lord. They will not look alike. We will not all have grey, blue, or black eyes. Our features will differ one from another, and in our acts, dispositions, and efforts to accumulate, distribute, and dispose of our time, talents, wealth, and whatever the Lord gives to us, in our journey through life, we will differ just as much as in our features. The point that the Lord wishes to bring us to is to obey His counsel and observe His word. Then everyone will be dictated so that we can act as a family. Then if br. Robert wanted a pair of boots, pants, a coat, or a hat, or a dress for his wife or child, he could have it, but only in the order of God, and not until he can be dictated by the Priesthood.

I am talking with regard to our temporal affairs—of being so dictated, guided, and directed, that every man's time and talents will amount to all he could wish and desire. Are the Latter-day Saints in this situation? Partially so. Can they be dictated? Yes, in some things. You take these very men and women who want to make us all equal, and they tell us that we are covetous, because we have horses, carriages, houses, lands, and money. Have the poor got greedy eyes? Are they covetous and penurious? I shall go a little too far if I am not careful. I must guard myself, because the Lord has chosen the poor of this world. But what kind of poor? Now the poor may be divided into three classes. In the first, place there is the Lord's poor, of which you may pick up one here and another there, one in a city, two in a family. Is there any other kind? Yes, you come across a certain class that may be called the

Devil's poor. Is there any other class? Yes, there is another class, who, long before I ever mentioned them, were denominated poor devils. Hence we have the Lord's poor, the devil's poor, and poor devils.

We have plenty of men in this community whom we have gathered from England, Scotland, France, Germany, and the islands of the sea. They have believed the truth and received it, and we have sent for them here that they may live their religion. But if Jesus tells the truth, there is a certain class of people who receive the truth without the love of it. When such characters gather—and there are plenty of them here—they would just as soon fellowship, deal, and associate with, and hold in close communion the poor miserable sharks that follow us, as they would with the best Saint here, and they do not know the difference. Why is this? Because, although they have embraced the gospel and know it is, true, they have not received the spirit of Christ.

When we come to the doctrines that we preach, as contained in the Bible, and lay them before the people, the whole Christian world cannot gainsay a word of them. I have read many and many a time out of the prophecies, and the sayings of the Savior and His apostles that the Bible contains, until they who listened have got up and declared they would hear no more from that wicked book, believing it to be the Book of Mormon. Priests and deacons have declared they would hear no more from that vile record. I have said, "Does not this agree with your faith and feelings?" "No, it does not, and if we had it in our houses, we would take the tongs and put it in the fire." "Well," I have replied, "the book I have been reading from is the Holy Bible, the Old and New Testaments, translated by order of King James." But they did not know what those records contained. When we come to the doctrines contained in this book the Christians cannot gainsay them; they are struck dumb and silent as night, or rage in anger. Truth overcomes error, and when it is set before the people, the honest receive it. I wonder if there are any elders here who ever had a minister, deacon, or so-called Christian say to them, "If you will perform such and such miracles I will believe." I have had that said to me a great many times; it always shocked me. I would say to them: "You have not read the Bible, I think." "Oh, yes, we have," they would say, "we are Bible scholars." "Well, then, I will ask you a question. Did you ever read in your Bible anything like this—'A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas?'" "We do not know that we ever did." I would turn to the passage and show it to them. Still, men have believed because they have seen a miracle wrought. They cannot withstand that by argument, because they see the truth mathematically demonstrated. Do such characters endure? No; they come here and then turn away from their God, from the angels, from the holy prophecies of the Lord Jesus, from their brethren and benefactors who brought them here from the land of oppression, where they could not own so much as a chicken, and where almost all they could get was a morsel of bread. Yet they come here and turn away from their brethren and the covenants they have made, and are traitors to God and heaven, and to the good in the heavens and on the earth. Are there men who came here in this way who have got rich? Yes, there are men now in this city who came here poor, naked, and barefoot, and willing to take a spade and go a ditching for me, or for anybody else who would furnish them a little bread, and now they are rich. They have made their wealth out of this people who constitute the kingdom of God, and they are using it to build up the kingdom of the devil. What are we to say to them? I would say, let them alone severely. The man who will apostatize from the truth, forsake his God and his religion, is a traitor to everything there is in heaven, earth, and hell. There is no soundness, goodness, truth, or virtue in him; nothing but darkness and corruption, and down to hell he will go. This may grate on the delicate ears of some, and they may think it is a pretty hard sentence, still it is true.

When apostates in this city or Territory crave your gold, silver, fine flour, and your substance, refuse them. Tell them they have the same privilege to earn bread that you have, and if they will work for and earn it, like honest men and women, they are free to do so, but not to pluck it from the pockets of the honest and poor. Let the Latter-day Saints give their substance to men who will pay their tithing, help to support the elders in their preaching to us, donate to the families here whose husbands and fathers have gone to preach the gospel to the nations, and let the apostates alone. If I were to ask you honestly and sincerely, and in the character of a Christian, and then a little stronger, in the name of the Lord God of Israel, will you let apostates alone and trade with them no more, what would the Saints say?

How many of the Latter-day Saints would say—"I would as soon trade with this man as that man, or spend my

money in this store as in that store, even though they pay tithing, and do good with their means?" Those men and women in whom this feeling exists must get rid of it, or they will not be numbered with those who are of one heart and of one mind. Now, remember that! I will promise those who feel in their hearts that they would sooner trade with an apostate or with a corrupt outsider, than with a brother, if the former would sell them a shawl a dollar cheaper, and persist in such a course of things, that they will never enter in at the strait gate, nor be numbered with those who are sanctified and prepared to enjoy the celestial presence of God our Father and of Jesus the Redeemer. I promise you this in the name of the Lord God of Israel.

You may say it is hard that I should dictate you in your temporal affairs. Is it not my privilege to dictate you? Is it not my privilege to give this people counsel to direct them so that their labors will build up the Kingdom of God instead of the kingdom of the devil? I will quote you a little Scripture, if you wish, the words of an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ to me. You may think that I saw him in vision, and it was a vision given right in broad daylight. Said he—"Never spend another day to build up a Gentile city, but spend your days, dollars, and dimes for the upbuilding of the Zion of God upon the earth, to promote peace and righteousness and to prepare for the coming of the Son of Man, and he who does not abide this law will suffer loss."

That is a saying of one of the apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ. He said it to me. Do you want to know his name? It is not recorded in the New Testament among the apostles, but it was an apostle whom the Lord called and ordained in this my day, and in the day of a good portion of this congregation, and his name was Joseph Smith, junior. These words were delivered to me in July, 1833, in the town of Kirtland, Geauga County, State of Ohio. The word to the elders who were there was: "Never, from this time henceforth, do you spend one day or one hour to sustain the kingdoms of this world or the kingdoms of the devil, but sustain the Kingdom of God to your uttermost." Now, if I were to ask the elders of Israel to abide this, what would be the reply of some amongst us? The language in the hearts of some would be—"It is none of your business where I trade." I will promise those who feel thus that they will never enter the celestial Kingdom of our Father and God. That is my business. It is my business to preach the truth to the people, and it will be my business by and by to testify for the just and to bear witness against the ungodly. It is your privilege to do as you please. Just please yourselves; but when you do so, will you please bear the results and not whine over them.

It is the way with thousands and thousands, when they burn their fingers they will turn round and complain of somebody else, when they themselves are the only ones to blame. How natural is it for some to endeavor to blame others for the troubles their own follies have induced! It is a trick of the devil. You never see Saints take this course. When they do wrong they do not try to lay the responsibility on their neighbor, or on some brother or sister. The Saint is ready to acknowledge his fault, to bear the responsibility, and to kiss the rod and reverence the hand that corrects him. But you hear those who are not Saints continually complaining. It is so, to a great extent, with our newcomers. When they come here they look for perfection. They say this is Zion. And so it is; but if we go to the Scriptures we shall find that the Zion of God is composed of the pure in heart. Brethren and sisters, have you Zion within you? If Jesus Christ is not in you, the apostle says, "then are ye reprobates." If the Zion of God is not within the bosom of you who profess to be Latter-day Saints take care that you are not reprobates. Be careful that no man takes advantage of you, leads you astray, and causes you to leave the Church and Kingdom of God, apostatize, and go down to hell. If you have Jesus and the Kingdom of God within you, then the Zion of God is here.

Our brethren and sisters, when they gather here, are apt to find fault and to say this is not right and that is not right, and this brother or that sister has done wrong, and they do not believe that he or she can be a Latter-day Saint in reality and do such things. The people come here from the east and the west, from the north and the south, with all their traditions, which impede their progress in the truth and are difficult to lay aside. Yet they will pass judgment on the acts of their brethren and sisters. I want to ask who made them the judges of the servants and handmaidens of the Almighty, who, shoulder to shoulder, have borne off this kingdom for more than a third of a century? Thousands upon whom the yoke of Christ has rested so long, and who have borne off the kingdom, are judged and found fault with, by some who probably were baptized last summer or but a short time ago. You know that this is so, you are witnesses to the truth of what I am saying, for you hear it yourselves. Now, who are they who will be one with Christ? If I were to tell the truth just as it is, it might not be congenial to the feelings of some

of my hearers, for truth is not always pleasant when it relates to our own dear selves. You take some of those characters to whom I have referred today, who want us all to be of one heart and of one mind, and they think we cannot be so unless we all have the same number of houses, farms, carriages, and horses, and the same amount in greenbacks. There are plenty in this Church who entertain such a notion, and I do not say but there are good men who, if they had the power, would dictate in this manner, and in doing so they would exercise all the judgment they are masters of, but let such characters guide and dictate, and they would soon accomplish the overthrow of this Church and people. This is not what the Lord meant when He said: "Be ye of one heart and of one mind." He meant that we must be one in observing His word and in carrying out His counsel, and not to divide our worldly substance so that a temporary equality might be made among the rich and the poor.

You take these very characters who are so anxious for the poor, and what would they tell us? Just what they told us back yonder—"Sell your feather beds, your gold rings, earrings, breast pins, necklaces, your silver teaspoons or tablespoons, or anything valuable that you have in the world, to help the poor." I re- collect once the people wanted to sell their jewelry to help the poor; I told them that would not help them. The people wanted to sell such things so that they might be able to bring into camp three, ten, or a hundred bushels of corn meal. Then they would sit down and eat it up, and they would have nothing with which to buy another hundred bushels of meal, and would be just where they started. My advice was for them to keep their jewelry and valuables, and to set the poor to work—setting out orchards, splitting rails, digging ditches, making fences, or anything useful, and so enable them to buy meal and flour and the necessities of life.

A great many good men would say to me—"Br. Brigham, you have a gold ring on your finger, why not give it to the poor?" Because to do so would make them worse off. Go to work and get a gold ring, then you will have yours and I will have mine. That will adorn your body. Not that I care anything about a gold ring. I do not have a gold ring on my finger perhaps once in a year.

You who are poor and want me to sell that ring, go to work and I will dictate you how to make yourselves comfortable, and how to adorn your bodies and become delightful. But no, in many instances you would say—"We will not have your counsel, we want your money and your property." This is not what the Lord wants of us.

There was a certain class of men called Socialists, or Communists, organized, I believe, in France. I remember there was a very smart man, by the name of M. Cabot, came over with a company of several hundreds. When they came to America they found the City of Nauvoo deserted and forsaken by the "Mormons," who had been driven away. They set themselves down there where we had built our fine houses, and made our farms and gardens, and made ourselves rich by the labor of our own hands, and they had to send back year by year to France for money to assist them to sustain themselves. We went there naked and barefoot, and had wisdom enough, under the dictation of the Prophet, to build up a beautiful city and temple by our own economy and industry without owing a cent for it. We came to these mountains naked and barefoot. Are you not speaking figuratively? Yes, I am, for it was only the figure that got here, for, comparatively, we left ourselves behind. We lived on rawhide as long we could get it, but when it came to the wolf beef it was pretty tough. We lived, however, and built a fort, and built our houses inside the fort. Then we commenced our gardens, we planted our corn, wheat, rye, buckwheat, oats, potatoes, beets, carrots, onions, parsnips, and we planted our peach and apple seeds, and we got grapes and strawberries, and currants from the mountains. The seeds grew, and so did the Latter-day Saints, and we are here today.

I am not infrequently asked the question—"What induced you to come to this desert sterile country?" Sometimes my answer is—"We came here to get rid of the so-called Christians." This is somewhat of a stumbling block to them; they do not know how to understand it. They could understand it if they had been with us and had seen the Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians leading on the mob to rob, plunder, and destroy, as I have seen them. Do you think we came here of our own choice? No; we would have stayed in those rich valleys and prairies back yonder if we could have had the privilege of inheriting the land for which we had paid the government our gold and silver, but we could not, so we came here because we were obliged to. And now we are gathering, gathering. Did you ever read in the New Testament that the Kingdom of Heaven in the last days would be like a net cast into the sea which should gather all kinds—the good and the bad? If this is not a proof to the inhabitants of the earth that

this is the Kingdom of God, why there is abundance of other evidence to prove it. But this is one true evidence to all the inhabitants of the earth—we are gathering the good and the bad of all kinds. The good, I expect, will improve until they are gathered into the garner, and the bad will be cast away, thrust overboard.

Now, I want to come back to a subject upon which I have already touched. I want to hit somebody or other. Will you remember it? Never, from this time henceforth and forever, sustain a man, men, a people, a community, or anybody that operates against or forsakes the Kingdom of God. Do you know what I call them, or have you forgotten what I said about the poor of this world? The Lord has chosen them, it is true, but He has not chosen the devil's poor nor the poor devils. They who forsake or operate against the Kingdom of God are what I call poor, miserable devils. That is a harsh expression, especially to come from the pulpit, but I built this stand to say just what I pleased in it. Who among the people of the world can dictate for themselves? They want to be talked to, guided, directed, pampered, and caressed like little children. This people also do. How many are there here who, if they had stayed in their native land, would ever have owned a chicken or a sixpence, who have now a good house, farm, garden, orchard, and a carriage to ride in? There are hundreds.

Shall I make an application of this? If you please I will. The Lord owns the heavens and the earth, all things are His, and He delights to give them to His children, and He would much sooner that they should enjoy the good things of the earth than that they should not do so, if they would use them for the accomplishment of His purposes. It would cheer and comfort His heart to see all the Latter-day Saints combined in their efforts to promote His kingdom instead of promoting the kingdoms of this world. But we are but children, and the Lord is merciful, gracious, and long-suffering to His people and to all the inhabitants of the earth. We are all His children—saint or sinner, it makes no difference. Every son and daughter of Adam and Eve that ever came on this earth is the offspring of that God who lives in the heavens whom we serve and acknowledge. How merciful He is to His children! To see the wicked flourish like a green bay tree, and see the nations of the earth that oppose Him, set at naught all His counsel and will have none of His reproof, and spurn His servants, yet see how merciful He is to them. But let me say that the time is now at hand when the chastening hand of the Almighty will be upon the nations of the earth. He has commenced His work. Through His kind providences He has ordained that it should commence here where it commenced in the morning of creation. On this continent He will wind up His work; from here He will send the gospel of Jesus Christ to the uttermost parts of the earth, and woe to the nation that rejects it, and that persecutes and slays His servants; they will have to pay the debt.

I can make a just comparison between the nations of the earth and the children of Israel. Of all the hundreds of thousands who left Egypt, and who were over twenty years of age, who crossed the Red Sea, and traveled in the wilderness, two only were permitted to go into the land of Canaan. This was in consequence of their transgressions, and the Lord cut them off in the flesh that He might save them in the day of the Lord Jesus. So it will be with all the nations of the earth. Some few will be saved, but, to use scripture terms, very few will escape the punishment of the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. The Lord is merciful, but, when He comes to His Kingdom on the earth, He will banish traitors from His presence, and they will be sons of perdition. Every apostate who ever received this gospel in faith, and had the Spirit of it, will have to repent in sackcloth and ashes, and sacrifice all he possesses, or be a son of perdition, go down to hell, and there dwell with the damned; and those who persecute and destroy the people of God, and shed the blood of innocence, will be judged accordingly.

Now, if you will please to hearken and hear, you Latter-day Saints, do not spend another dollar with an apostate, neither in this city nor in any other. Will we purchase from outsiders? Yes, and call them ladies and gentlemen, because many of them are the friends of God if they did but know it. There are plenty in the world who want to be, but very few come here except these apostates, who would sap the fountain of the Kingdom of God, and destroy all that was virtuous and truthful on the earth, like many others who never come into the Church. Let them alone. Will you sell them your wheat? No, sir; if you do—but remember you can do just as you please. I will not injure you, nor speak, nor even think evil of you, but my prayer will ever be—"O, God, the eternal Father, I ask Thee, in the name of Thy Son Jesus Christ, to save the righteous, and let the wicked and the ungodly go to their place and share the reward of their doings." I will lift my heart to God in your behalf who feel to build up the kingdoms of this world. You say this is harsh. No, it is not, it is good policy, to say nothing about religion. Is it not good policy to

trade with and support our friends? If you go to London, Paris, the German States, or even in America, do you ever hear a Catholic found fault with for trading at a store owned by a Catholic? And the same is true with regard to the Church of England, Methodists, or any other society. It is good policy and economy to sustain each other. Then why is it not so with the Latter-day Saints? It is so, and we will do it, so help us God. We are here because there was no other place on the face of the earth where we could go and be safe; but here we are all right, and here the Lord designs that we should stay. By and by we shall hear the locomotive whistle, screaming through our valleys, dragging in its train our brethren and sisters, and taking away the apostates. "Will not our enemies overslaugh us when we get the railroad?" No, ladies and gentlemen. Do you want to know what will take every apostate and corrupt hearted man and woman from our midst? Live so that the fire of God may be in you and around about you and burn them out. But if we mingle, fellowship, shake hands with, and think they are as good as anybody, the Lord says: All right; you may try it until you are tired. But the Lord has said that He will gather the pure in heart; they shall come by thousands, and "the chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall jostle one another in the broadways, they shall seem like torches, they shall run like the lightnings." I do not know what the prophet referred to here unless it was one of those engines. But the Lord will gather up His people, and fill the land of Zion with those who love and serve Him, and will waste away the wicked and the ungodly.

I can say to you, Latter-day Saints, I will guide you in the way of truth if you will be guided, and I will tell you how to save yourselves spiritually and temporally.

May the Lord bless you. Amen.